

REMARKS

Applicant gratefully acknowledges the allowance of claims 1-11, 13 and 14. Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection of claim 12 based on US Pat. No. 6,608,617 (Hoffknecht).

Claim 12 requires a first board holding a ballast circuit, a second board holding power semiconductor devices, and a mechanical switch that turns lamps on, off or dim. The compact, two-board arrangement, in one embodiment, fits inside a standard electrical junction box. This permits a contractor to replace a conventional on/off switch with an inventive dimmer switch that can operate incandescent and fluorescent lamps without requiring a separate ballast for the fluorescent lamp.

The Hoffknecht system provides an interface for SCENE/ZONE lighting control. A user may select one or more zones and adjust the lighting in each zone and stored setting of zones in a common scene and may have multiple scenes with different illumination settings for each zone. But the Hoffknecht apparatus is a computer interface, not a switch that provides power to lights. In column 4, line 61- column 5, line 3 Hoffknecht makes clear that the ballasts are remote from the interface and are located at the power distribution panel, not in the wall box that holds the interface.

The rejection identifies the printed circuit board 20 and the touch pads 12 as the boards of claim 12 and applies faceplate 15 or 105 as a switch. The board 20 of Hoffknecht does not hold a ballast circuit and the touch pads 12 do not hold power semiconductor devices. The oscillator in Hoffknecht is not part of an electronic ballast. Instead, the oscillator is part of the touch pad system and touching a pad changes the frequency of the oscillator.

The claimed invention is different from Hoffknecht. The claimed invention replaces a conventional on/off wall switch. The invention provides a wall-mounted two-board apparatus with a ballast for fluorescent lamps and power semiconductors. Unlike Hoffknecht, one who uses the invention does not have to supply a separate ballast at the power distribution panel because the claimed apparatus carries its own ballast.

In summary, Hoffknecht fails to show or suggest two-board apparatus with a ballast, power semiconductors and a mechanical dimming switch. Claim 12 is patentable over the art of record and should be allowed.

Respectfully submitted,

HISCOCK & BARCLAY, LLP

By: 

Thomas R. Fitzgerald
Reg. No. 26,730
2000 HSBC Plaza
Rochester, NY 14604
Tel: (585) 295-4469
Fax: (585) 295-8456